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We The AMERICAN FOREIGN BORN

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
Social and Economic Statistics Administration
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America's foreign born are just like all other Americans. As a matter of fact, all of us here in America—all of us except the American Indian, that is—are immigrants or the offspring of immigrants.

We The AMERICAN FOREIGN BORN

No. 15 in a series of reports from the 1970 Census

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We The AMERICAN FOREIGN BORN

WE, THE AMERICAN FOREIGN BORN

Most of us Americans are descended from people who were born and reared here in America. Some of us can trace our lineage in this country back two or three generations to the end of the last century. And some of us can go back yet further, back to those hardy folk who carved out tiny settlements virtually with their bare hands along America's east coast some 300 years ago.

Almost 10 million of us, however, must go back to Italy, or Germany, or now, in ever-increasing numbers, to China, Japan, the Philippines, or Cuba to learn about our forebears. We, who were born abroad of foreign parents and now are living in America, are America's foreign born.

MANY OF US ENTERED THE COUNTRY THROUGH THE EAST COAST IMMIGRATION CENTER ESTABLISHED ON ELLIS ISLAND

ELLIS ISLAND

At the turn of the century, when immigration to the United States was much greater than it is today, many of us entered the country through the East Coast immigration center established on Ellis Island in New York Harbor. Some of us arrived there near exhaustion following the 6-week ocean voyage from Europe, generally in steerage---the below-decks sections of

ocean liners where the poorest travelers were berthed---and carrying less than $5 in our pockets.

Many of us arrived lugging feather mattresses wrapped around what we deemed to be precious heirlooms and carrying our other possessions in bundles wrapped with string or strapped to our backs.

The scenes on Ellis Island of us immigrants in peasant dress, some dancing to folk music, others huddled together shyly in family groups, were once familiar. These scenes, however, probably will never be re-enacted, unless possibly in a historical movie. In the 1920's the number of persons allowed entry was cut drastically, and Ellis Island faded into the background. By the mid-50's Ellis Island was declared surplus, and plans were launched to make it a national shrine. Nowadays, prospective immigrants, dressed generally in modern garb, are admitted at all regular ports of entry just as visitors are. They now report to an immigration inspector trained to make necessary checks but under much less hectic conditions than prevailed in those earlier times at Ellis Island.

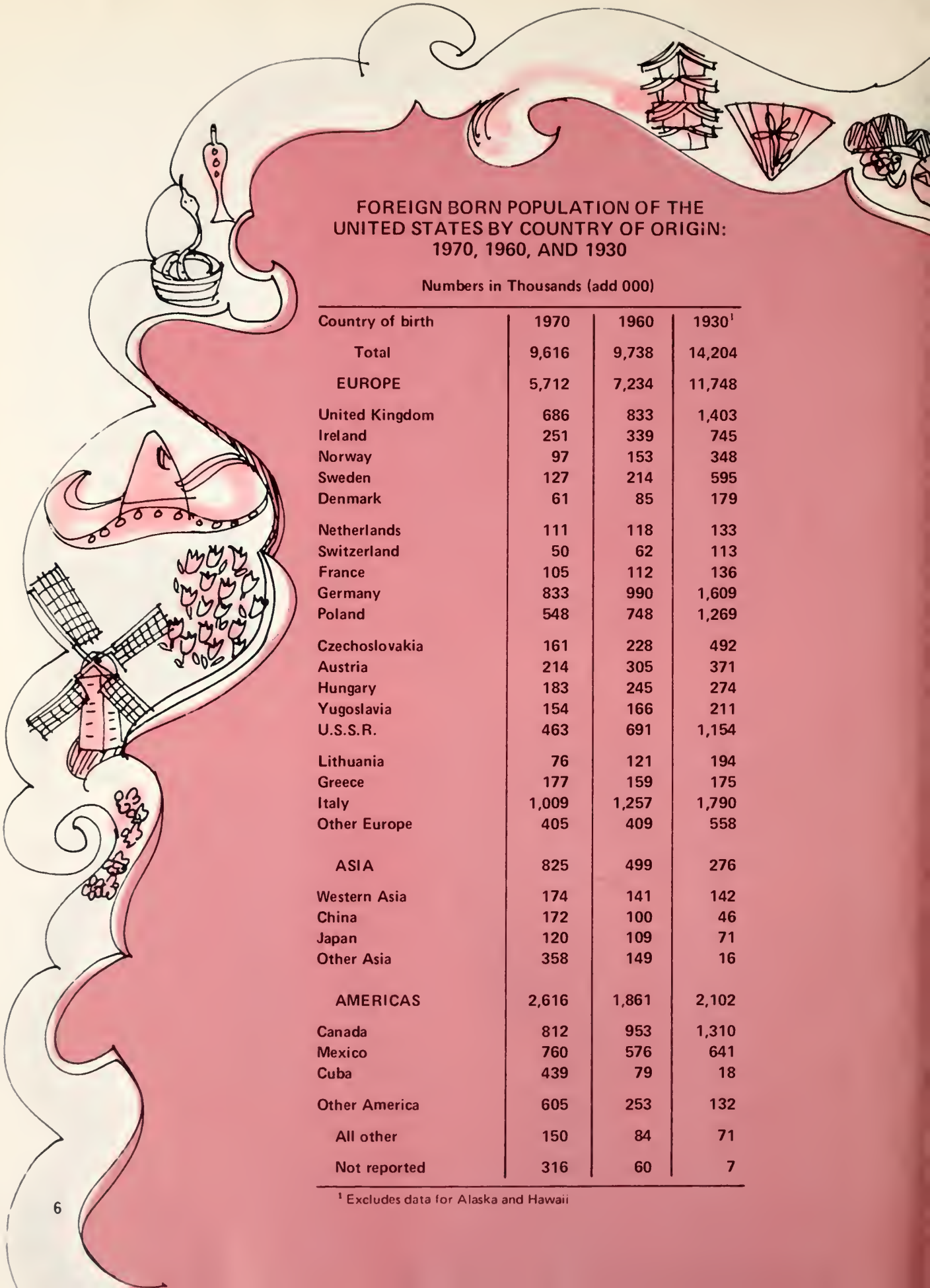
IMMIGRATION LAWS

The flow of immigrants to America is now regulated by quota laws. Until the 1920's, persons seeking entry were admitted virtually at will. The only restrictions were a few laws passed by Congress in the late 1800's aimed at keeping out undesirables. Excluded, too, in a separate law passed in 1882, were Chinese. The Chinese were recruited to work in gold mining camps and on railroad construction in the West. American labor, however, reacting to the low wages the Chinese were accepting, got Congress to pass the Chinese Exclusion Act which blocked the legal entry of Chinese into America for several decades.

In 1921, Congress established relatively low quotas for immigrants from nations outside the Western Hemisphere. Because most of us foreign born had been coming from Europe, the new law resulted in a sharp drop in immigration. Legislation abolishing national quotas and containing new immigration provisions was passed in 1965. Under the new law there is an overall limitation on the number of persons who may be admitted, and preference is granted to close relatives of American citizens and of resident aliens.

IMMIGRATION: 1820 TO 1970

Period	Immigrants	Period	Immigrants
1820 30	151,824	1901 10	8,795,386
1831 40	599,125	1911 20	5,735 811
1841 50	1,713 251	1921 30	4,107,209
1851 60	2,598 214	1931 40	528 431
1861 70	2,314,824	1941 50	1,035 039
1871 80	2,812 191	1951 60	2,515,479
1881 90	5,246,613	1961 70	3,321,671
1891 1900	3,687,564		



FOREIGN BORN POPULATION OF THE UNITED STATES BY COUNTRY OF ORIGIN: 1970, 1960, AND 1930

Numbers in Thousands (add 000)

Country of birth	1970	1960	1930[1]
Total	9,616	9,738	14,204
EUROPE	5,712	7,234	11,748
United Kingdom	686	833	1,403
Ireland	251	339	745
Norway	97	153	348
Sweden	127	214	595
Denmark	61	85	179
Netherlands	111	118	133
Switzerland	50	62	113
France	105	112	136
Germany	833	990	1,609
Poland	548	748	1,269
Czechoslovakia	161	228	492
Austria	214	305	371
Hungary	183	245	274
Yugoslavia	154	166	211
U.S.S.R.	463	691	1,154
Lithuania	76	121	194
Greece	177	159	175
Italy	1,009	1,257	1,790
Other Europe	405	409	558
ASIA	825	499	276
Western Asia	174	141	142
China	172	100	46
Japan	120	109	71
Other Asia	358	149	16
AMERICAS	2,616	1,861	2,102
Canada	812	953	1,310
Mexico	760	576	641
Cuba	439	79	18
Other America	605	253	132
All other	150	84	71
Not reported	316	60	7

[1] Excludes data for Alaska and Hawaii

WHO WE ARE

What are we foreign born like? What countries are we from? Where do we tend to go when we do get here? What kind of work do we do?

To answer the first question: We're just like any other Americans: All of us---newcomers and oldtimers alike---are immigrants or the offspring or descendants of immigrants. And shortly after we arrive here most of us blend into the American mainstream and we become, then, Americans.

The 1970 census shows a large proportion of America's foreign born came from Europe, some came from Asia, and relatively large numbers came from Canada, Mexico, and other countries in the Western Hemisphere.

Events abroad often foreshadowed a movement of specific groups of foreign nationals to America. Many Germans came here between 1840 and 1850 because of political unrest and poor economic conditions at home. The potato famine in Ireland sent thousands of Irish streaming through the blighted countryside to seaports and ships bound for America in the late 1840's and 1850's. British, French, Norwegians, and Swedes, at one time or another, felt the push of economic pressures at home and the pull of prospective free land and good wages here in America and made the move to the New World.

And it was famine in the Canton region of China, coupled with a need for laborers here, that resulted in the influx of Chinese to America between 1850 and 1882.

MOST OF US ARE FROM EUROPE

Government immigration records, started in 1820, show that most of us foreign born have come here from Europe. Of 9.6 million foreign born counted in the 1970 census, 5.7 million were of European origin. Of the total of nearly 42 million people who came here between 1820 and 1960, 34 million were European.

In colonial days most of America's immigrants came from Great Britain and Ireland (Eire), with a sprinkling from Germany, France, the Netherlands, Belgium, and Luxembourg. During the 19th Century the source of the flow changed: The English and Irish continued to come here, but Germans began coming in ever-increasing numbers.

In the 1890's, however, the flow changed again, and Italians began flocking to our shores. From the middle of the decade until the start of World War I, Italian immigrants comprised about a quarter of all persons admitted to this country. Between World Wars I and II, Italian immigration dropped off, only to resume again shortly after World War II, although it never did return to the level of the 1895-1914 period.

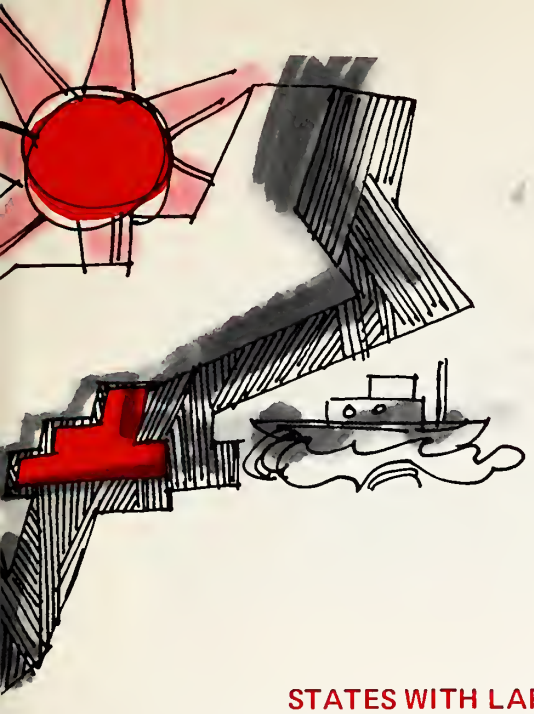
Reflecting in part the great influx of Italians to America in 1895-1914, the foreign born counted in the 1970 census included over a million persons of Italian origin. Counted in the census, too, were over 832,000 persons from Germany.

Although a relatively large number of Canadians entered the country over a 20-year period following the end of the Civil War, the flow slackened off only to resume in 1908. There were few immigrants from Mexico until 1909, but since then except for the period from 1931 to 1952 immigrants from our neighbor to the south have been coming in to the United States in large numbers.

The 1970 census showed that over 800,000 of our foreign born were from Canada and another 760,000 from Mexico.

WE SETTLE NEAR OUR 'PORTS OF ENTRY'

Immigrants to America tend to settle in the general area of their port of entry. More than two-thirds of those who came here from Italy, for example, live in the northeastern part of the country, where they landed. Similarly, more than half of the foreign born who immigrated here from China and Japan and landed on our west coast, have remained in the West. And, of course, most immigrants from Mexico live in the States that border on Mexico: Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, and California.



STATES WITH LARGE NUMBERS OF FOREIGN BORN: 1970

(Includes, by State, countries from which the foreign born have emigrated and numbers of people from these countries)

NATIVITY AND PARENTAGE	NEW YORK	CALIFORNIA	NEW JERSEY	ILLINOIS	MASSACHUSETTS	PENNSYLVANIA	MICHIGAN	OHIO	TEXAS
Total population	18,236,882	19,957,304	7,168,143	11,109,450	5,688,903	11,793,864	8,875,068	10,650,903	11,195,416
Native	16,127,106	18,199,314	6,533,325	10,480,552	5,194,243	11,347,969	8,450,759	10,334,407	10,885,644
Native parentage	12,241,661	14,965,225	5,012,280	8,907,709	3,797,179	9,660,824	7,190,798	9,339,557	9,996,398
Foreign or mixed parentage	3,885,445	3,234,089	1,521,045	1,572,843	1,397,064	1,687,145	1,259,961	994,850	889,246
Foreign born	2,109,776	1,757,990	634,818	628,898	494,660	445,895	424,309	316,496	309,772
COUNTRY OF ORIGIN									
Total foreign born	2,109,776	1,757,990	634,818	628,898	494,660	445,895	424,309	316,496	309,772
United Kingdom	109,895	129,957	49,565	29,718	39,607	41,148	44,849	25,478	12,486
Ireland	93,818	20,342	18,186	19,579	33,967	14,971	4,362	5,088	1,798
Norway	17,371	11,894	5,237	6,479	2,309	1,226	1,502	703	594
Sweden	13,534	18,472	4,109	18,091	7,632	2,305	4,438	2,002	1,105
Denmark	6,366	14,111	2,704	4,698	1,149	1,015	2,379	860	711
Netherlands	11,421	27,993	8,575	5,825	2,118	1,919	15,095	1,909	1,522
Switzerland	8,493	13,108	4,113	2,311	1,294	1,638	1,060	1,375	626
France	23,681	21,743	7,150	5,117	4,227	4,425	3,120	2,990	2,225
Germany[1]	183,754	105,675	66,896	68,259	16,303	41,609	34,637	35,777	19,386
Poland	168,370	31,449	49,516	72,027	25,009	37,917	42,499	22,662	2,802
Czechoslovakia	32,363	12,790	12,070	19,318	1,624	19,886	6,871	17,562	3,568
Austria	65,606	20,249	16,827	16,566	3,839	21,873	7,881	11,641	2,122
Hungary	43,506	21,994	20,235	11,469	1,873	14,163	9,743	22,228	1,172
Yugoslavia	22,440	19,447	7,682	23,427	667	11,825	10,756	25,151	641
U.S.S.R.	147,993	55,465	33,166	29,590	23,505	36,084	17,134	13,870	2,678
Lithuania	10,417	5,255	4,049	18,276	7,551	6,056	4,113	3,369	311
Greece	44,478	14,971	10,585	22,308	16,019	8,929	7,760	8,536	1,963
Italy	352,711	80,495	116,444	60,243	70,415	93,758	31,986	36,164	3,696
Other Europe	82,314	59,768	30,126	21,145	44,648	13,473	26,048	14,376	3,481
Asia	133,114	275,540	27,569	40,449	23,681	21,177	25,783	19,834	17,800
Western Asia[2]	43,517	31,973	10,919	9,111	9,663	6,881	13,296	6,772	3,546
China[3]	42,425	66,397	4,093	6,863	5,690	3,258	3,026	2,542	3,738
Japan	10,784	44,550	2,561	4,566	1,601	2,017	1,838	1,788	3,313
Other Asia	36,388	132,620	9,996	19,909	6,727	9,021	7,623	8,732	7,203
Canada	85,176	153,725	18,185	21,875	109,714	13,318	90,696	18,190	8,859
Mexico	4,806	411,008	1,136	50,098	763	1,482	7,604	2,621	193,639
Cuba	72,224	36,429	59,282	15,607	5,092	3,210	2,046	2,199	5,378
Other America	284,767	108,969	34,645	20,656	16,241	9,807	6,967	5,724	10,331
All other	23,646	41,040	5,154	4,462	18,702	3,420	3,212	2,813	2,610
Not reported	67,512	46,101	21,612	21,305	16,711	19,261	11,768	13,376	8,268

[1] Includes West Germany and East Germany.
[2] Includes Turkey in Europe.
[3] Includes Taiwan and Mainland China.

MORE THAN 40 PERCENT IN TWO STATES

The Nation's two largest States together have more than two-fifths of all the foreign born in America. New York, with a 1970 total of 18.2 million people, had 2.1 million foreign born, while California, with 20 million people in 1970, had 1.8 million.

New York's 1970 foreign born came mostly from Italy (353,000), Germany (184,000), and Poland (168,000). From China, Japan, and other Asian nations there were only 133,000. In California, on the other hand, more of the foreign born were from Asian nations (a total of 276,000) than from these three European nations (about 217,000).

It's well known that relatively large numbers of Canadians have settled in States along our border with Canada---States such as New York and Michigan, for example. A little known fact is that in one of those border States, North Dakota, the country with the largest contingent of foreign born in the 1970 census was the Soviet Union! The census showed that 4,400 of the State's total of 18,400 foreign born were from the U.S.S.R.

And, although the largest contingent of foreign born living in Michigan in 1970 was from Canada, it's not so well known that people from Poland represented the third largest contingent among that State's foreign born. The census figures show that more than 10 percent of Michigan's 424,000 foreign born hailed from Poland.

....AND WE HAVE SETTLED IN CITY AREAS

In recent decades, most of us immigrants have settled in urban areas---generally in the big cities and their suburbs.

The 1970 census shows 91 percent of us living in urban areas (generally, places of 2,500 or more and their built-up environs). For the United States as a whole, only 73 percent of the population lived in such areas.

And, more particularly, about half of us live in the "central cities" of metropolitan areas, as against only 31 percent of the population as a whole.

ABOUT HALF OF US LIVE IN THE 'CENTRAL CITIES' OF METROPOLITAN AREAS

OUR AGE AND OUR SEX

As to our age----we're young and we're old. Sound like a contradiction? Here's the explanation: Those who arrived since 1960 are younger than the population as a whole. But these new arrivals, taken with those of us who have been here for longer periods of time, combine to form a relatively old segment of the population. As an illustration---86 percent of the recent arrivals (since 1960) are under 45. For the population as a whole, only 69 percent are under that age.

When we look at the total of 9.6 million foreign born we see that many of us came to America at the turn of the century, during the heyday of immigration. These folk, now in their 70's, 80's, and 90's, made the median (half-above and half-below) age of all the foreign born at the time of the 1970 census 52! And 10 years earlier, the median was 57.2! The median age for all Americans in 1970 was 28.1.

Looked at differently---32 percent of the foreign born were 65 or older at the time of the recent census, whereas less than 10 percent of all Americans were that old on census day.

A majority of us immigrants up until the year 1922 were male. In fact, the male proportion was around the 60 percent mark for about 100 years starting in 1820. The dip in the year 1922 was to 48.4 percent but then, in 1923 and for several following years, the percentage of males admitted again went above the 50 percent mark.

In 1930 the percentage of males among the newcomers to America again dropped to 48.4 and then began, year by year, to decline. In 1946 an all-time low was registered when only 25 percent of those admitted were male.

During the 1960's 45 percent of the incoming immigrants were male---about the same percentage as were the foreign born males among all the foreign born in the 1970 census. The number of males in the general population was 49 percent of the total at the time.

AGE

(Figures from 1970 Census)

TOTAL U.S. POPULATION:

Under 45 Years Old—69%
45 and Older—31%
Median Age—28.1 Years

U.S. FOREIGN BORN:

Under 45 Years Old—41%
45 and Older—59%
Median Age—52.0 Years

SEX

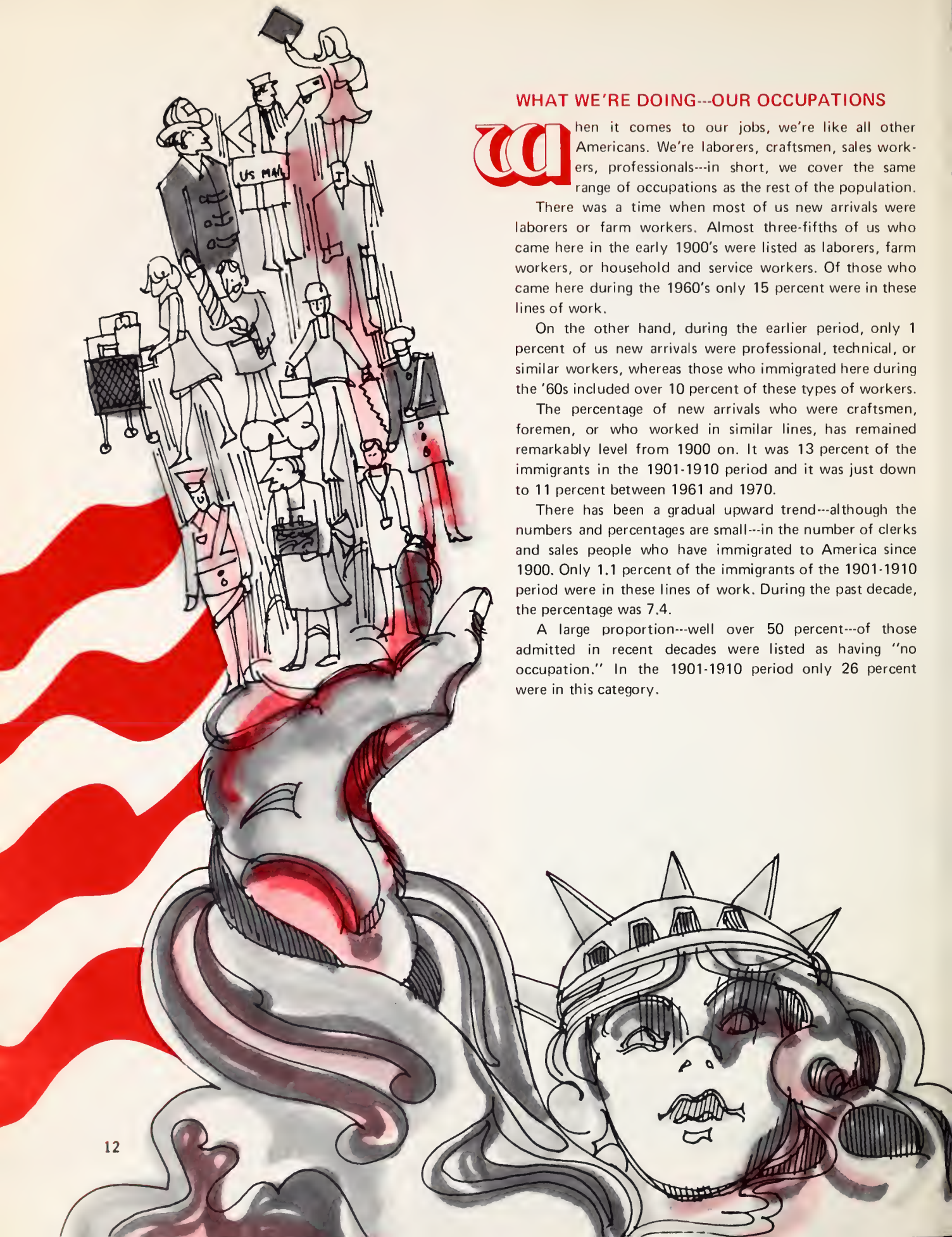
(Figures from 1970 Census)

FOR U.S.

Males: 98.9 Million (49%)
Females: 104.3 Million (51%)

FOR U.S. FOREIGN BORN

Males: 4.4 Million (46%)
Females: 5.2 Million (54%)



WHAT WE'RE DOING---OUR OCCUPATIONS

When it comes to our jobs, we're like all other Americans. We're laborers, craftsmen, sales workers, professionals---in short, we cover the same range of occupations as the rest of the population.

There was a time when most of us new arrivals were laborers or farm workers. Almost three-fifths of us who came here in the early 1900's were listed as laborers, farm workers, or household and service workers. Of those who came here during the 1960's only 15 percent were in these lines of work.

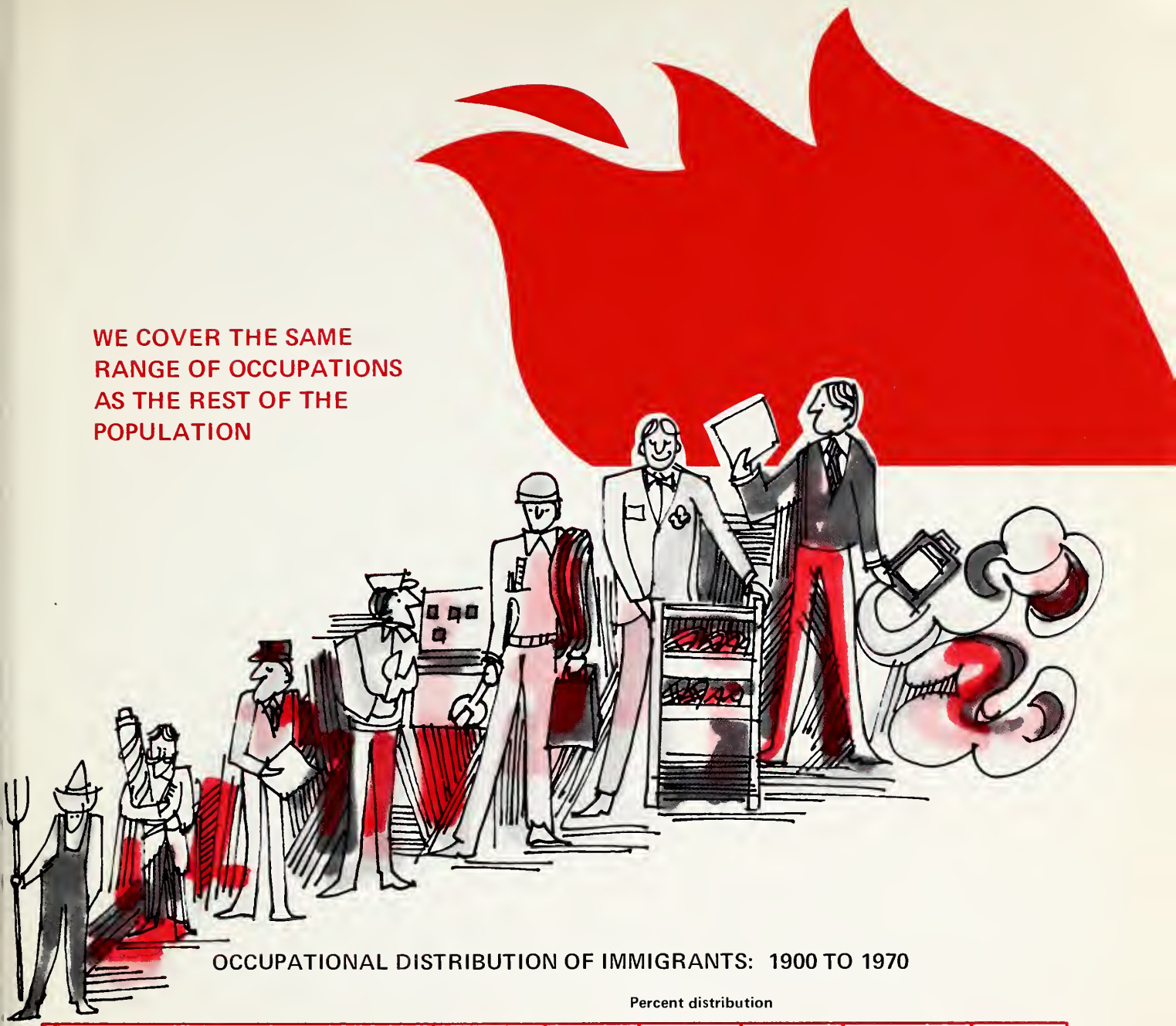
On the other hand, during the earlier period, only 1 percent of us new arrivals were professional, technical, or similar workers, whereas those who immigrated here during the '60s included over 10 percent of these types of workers.

The percentage of new arrivals who were craftsmen, foremen, or who worked in similar lines, has remained remarkably level from 1900 on. It was 13 percent of the immigrants in the 1901-1910 period and it was just down to 11 percent between 1961 and 1970.

There has been a gradual upward trend---although the numbers and percentages are small---in the number of clerks and sales people who have immigrated to America since 1900. Only 1.1 percent of the immigrants of the 1901-1910 period were in these lines of work. During the past decade, the percentage was 7.4.

A large proportion---well over 50 percent---of those admitted in recent decades were listed as having "no occupation." In the 1901-1910 period only 26 percent were in this category.

WE COVER THE SAME RANGE OF OCCUPATIONS AS THE REST OF THE POPULATION



OCCUPATIONAL DISTRIBUTION OF IMMIGRANTS: 1900 TO 1970

Period[1]	Total	Percent distribution: Professional, technical, and kindred workers	Clerical, sales, and kindred workers	Craftsmen, foremen, operative and kindred workers	Laborers except farm and mine	Miscellaneous[2]	No occupation
1961-70	100.0	10.2	7.4	11.1	3.9	11.6	55.9
1951-60	100.0	7.3	7.8	14.4	5.3	12.3	52.8
1941-50	100.0	7.9	7.9	13.3	2.4	13.8	54.7
1931-40	100.0	7.2	4.5	8.1	3.6	18.5	58.1
1921-30	100.0	2.7	4.3	14.4	15.0	24.3	39.2
1911-20	100.0	1.7	2.0	12.9	17.9	35.9	29.6
1901-10	100.0	1.0	1.1	13.2	26.1	32.9	25.7

[1] Data are for fiscal years ending June 30.

[2] Includes farmers, farm managers, managers, officials, proprietors, private household workers, service workers, farm laborers and foremen.

HOW MUCH SCHOOLING WE'VE HAD

Reflecting in part our relatively old age, we have had less schooling than the population as a whole. Median school years completed for the foreign born in 1970 was 7.4 years. For all Americans 25 and older, both males and females, the 1970 census figure was 12.1 years.

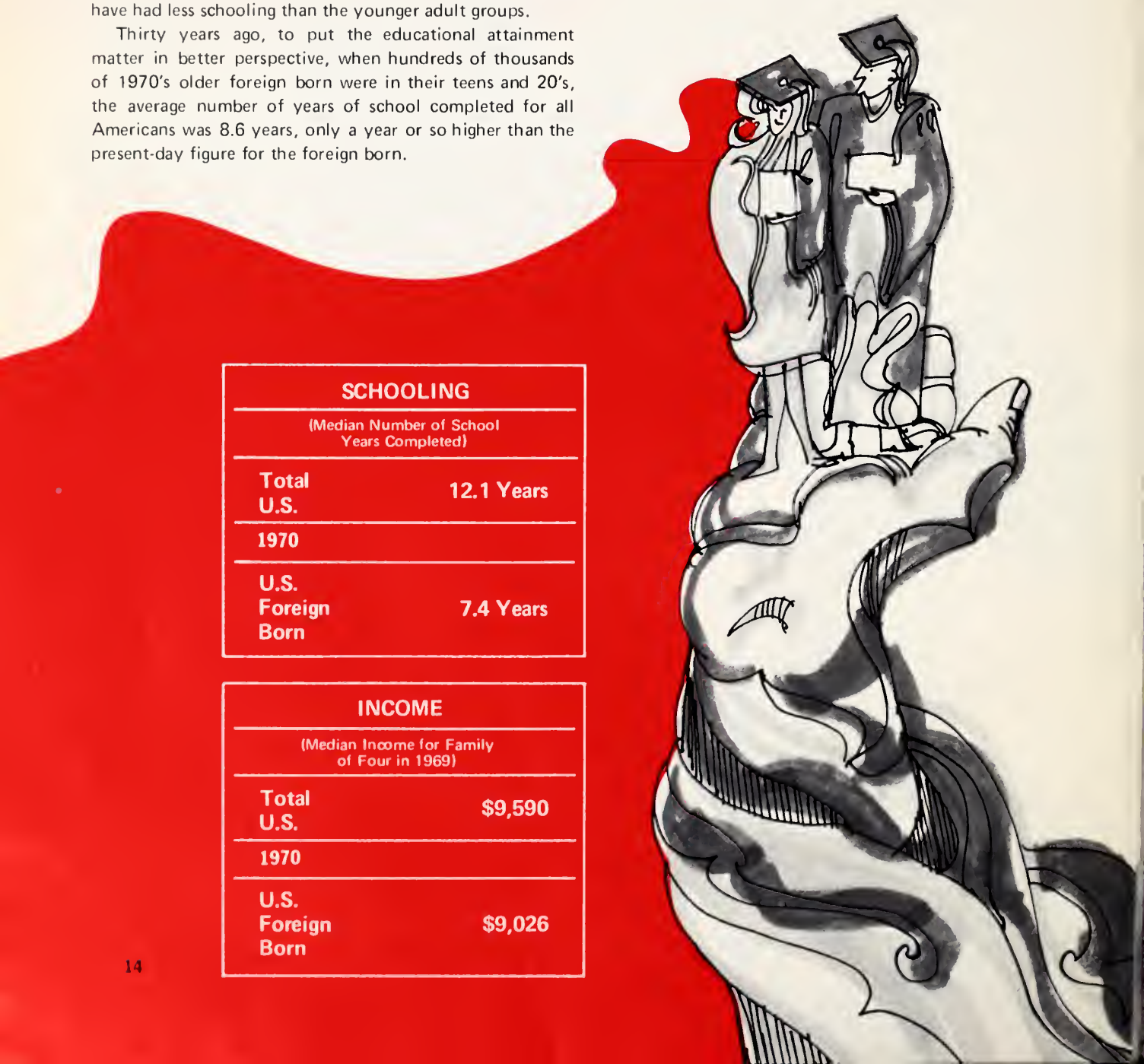
But these numbers may convey a wrong impression. When we speak of the foreign born we speak of people whose average age is 52. Older adults in the U.S. generally have had less schooling than the younger adult groups.

Thirty years ago, to put the educational attainment matter in better perspective, when hundreds of thousands of 1970's older foreign born were in their teens and 20's, the average number of years of school completed for all Americans was 8.6 years, only a year or so higher than the present-day figure for the foreign born.

OUR INCOMES

Median income of the 3.3 million families headed by a foreign-born person in 1969, the year covered for income by the 1970 census, was $9,026---not appreciably lower than the $9,590 median for all U.S. families.

And in considering families with incomes "below the low-income level," as defined by the Federal Government, the percentage of families headed by a foreign-born person in this category was just about the same as for all families in the United States: 11 percent.



SCHOOLING (Median Number of School Years Completed)	
Total U.S. 1970	12.1 Years
U.S. Foreign Born	7.4 Years

INCOME (Median Income for Family of Four in 1969)	
Total U.S. 1970	$9,590
U.S. Foreign Born	$9,026

OUR PLACE IN AMERICA'S FUTURE

We immigrants are now coming to America at a rate of almost 4 million a decade. With the American birthrate dropping as it has been during the past several years, we newcomers are becoming a more significant force in America's population picture.

Census Bureau statisticians have made a pair of projections of the population to the year 2000 using as a base a net of 4 million immigrants each 10 years.

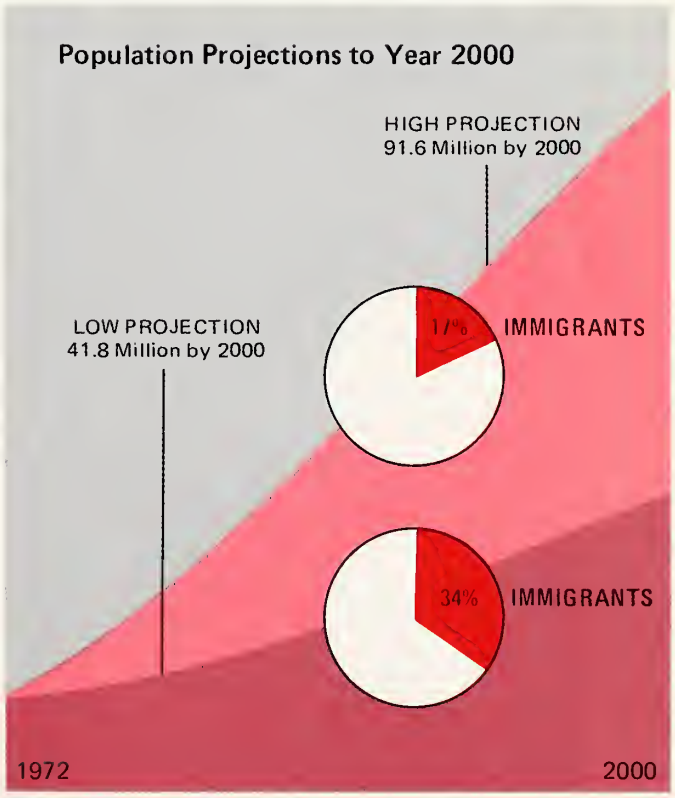
Under one of these projections, one with women having a relatively large number of babies---2.8 babies per woman of child-bearing age---America's population would rise 91.6 million by 2000. Of this number, the Census Bureau calculates, 17 percent would represent those entering the country over the 28-year period (from 1972) together with their survivors and descendants.

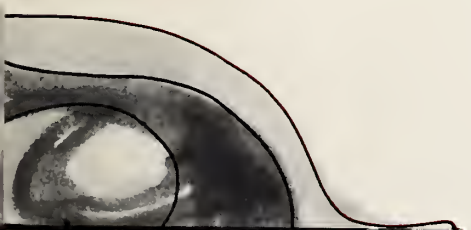
But if America's women continue to have fewer and fewer babies---only 1.8 per woman of child bearing age---the population will go up only 41.8 million in the 28 years and although we "immigrant women," just as other American women, will be having fewer babies, we recent arrivals and our offspring will constitute a high 34 percent of the increase.

It is probable the birthrate will be somewhere in between the two birthrates used as examples, and it's possible the number of us entering the country may go up or down. However, we the foreign born are sure to play an important role in the future population picture in America.

No other nation in the history of the world has welcomed more immigrants with more willingness and goodwill than America. Our very name symbolizes the "melting pot," a nation wherein men and women from every land have come together to live and grow as one country. Be we Irish, Italian, German, Polish, Chinese, Japanese—no matter where we may have been born—we are today, first and foremost, Americans. It is this very diversity which makes America so unique.

WE NEWCOMERS ARE BECOMING A MORE SIGNIFICANT FORCE IN AMERICA'S POPULATION PICTURE





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